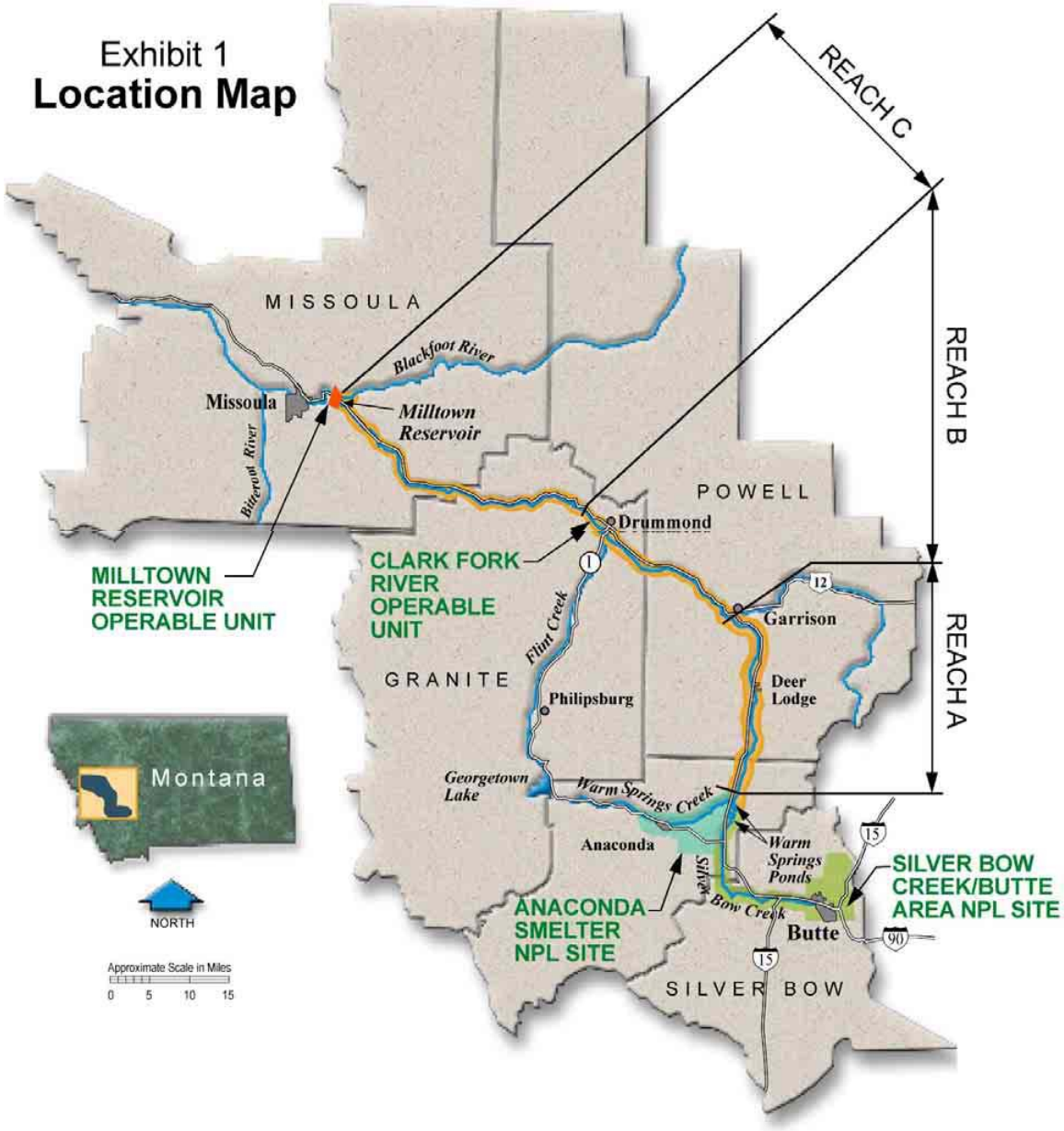
Clark Fork River Operable Unit

Remediation and Restoration

Project Description

The Clark Fork River Operable Unit (OU) is one of three OUs on the Milltown Reservoir/Clark Fork River Superfund Site. The other OUs are the Milltown Water Supply OU and the Milltown Reservoir Sediments OU. The CFR OU is defined as "surface water, bed sediments, tailings, impacted soils, ground water, aquatic resources, terrestrial resources, irrigation ditches and related tailings deposits, and air located within and adjacent to the historic 100-year floodplain of the Clark Fork River" The Clark Fork River OU will address principle and low-level unacceptable threats to human health and the environment for the Clark Fork River. The Deer Lodge Historically Irrigated Lands Time Critical Response Action is a removal action within the Clark Fork River OU being implemented to address threats to human health in areas near Deer Lodge, Montana, by cleaning up known yards and fields that exceed risk-based criteria for arsenic in soils. The Clark Fork River OU extends from the confluence of the old Silver Bow Creek channel with the reconstructed lower Mill-Willow bypass, to the maximum Milltown Reservoir pool. (See Exhibit 1) The majority of the cleanup is occurring in Reach A, with limited cleanup in Reach B, and no remediation activities required in Reach C.



The heavy metals (Cadmium, Copper, Zinc, and Lead) and arsenic in the Clark Fork River are from historic mining, milling and smelting processes linked to the Anaconda Company operations in Butte and Anaconda.

The primary sources of contamination in Reach A are tailings mixed with soil in the streambanks and the historic floodplain. These sources provide pathways to plant and animal life, and to humans who come in contact with the soils. Contaminants move from tailings and impacted soils through the process of erosion directly into the river and other surface waters. This movement provides pathways to terrestrial and aquatic life. In

addition to erosion of tailings and impacted soils, metals are leached directly from the tailings into groundwater and surface water.

In addition to remedial requirements set forth in the ROD, the State of Montana developed a Restoration Plan for the Clark Fork River Operable Unit in order to expedite the recovery time for aquatic and terrestrial resources in and along the Clark Fork River. The Restoration Plan builds on the remedy actions that EPA has selected. The Restoration Plan will focus on removing additional, identifiable areas of floodplain contamination and reducing current and future loading of metals to the Clark Fork River to restore aquatic resources and riparian wildlife habitat.

Montana DEQ will be the lead agency, implementing a combined remedy / restoration approach in order to maximize the effectiveness of the total cleanup.

For more information, contact

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Links:

Notice of Lodging and Public Comment Period on Proposed Consent Decrees and Natural Resource Restoration Plans

U.S. EPA - Clark Fork River Operable Unit
http://www.epa.gov/region8/superfund/mt/milltowncfr/cfr/

Montana Department of Justice
http://www.doj.mt.gov/lands/naturalresource/lawsuithistory.asp#settlement2008

CFRTAC - Clark Fork River Technical Assistance Committee
http://www.cfrtac.org/

Clark Fork Coalition
http://www.clarkfork.org/